



2002 Wetlands Reserve Program

Customer Focus —

Lauren and LaDonna Christensen have farmed in Moody County for decades. They purchased this particular property several years ago with the intention of restoring it. The bottomland field used to be cropped, but had a tendency to flood. Logs would wash onto the field. With the Big Sioux River running along the eastern edge, Lauren converted the less productive property in exchange for aesthetics and a place for relaxation.

Through the technical assistance provided by the local NRCS staff, Lauren was able to accomplish his goals. The staff designed a restoration plan for the area that was tailored to the Christensen's goals.

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) worked well in conjunction with the Emergency Wetland Reserve Protection (EWRP) which protected the flooded bottomland cropland. The cropland was subject to sediment and scour erosion and now is being protected by established native grasses of Prairie cordgrass, Switchgrass, and Western wheatgrass.

The landowner has made a special effort to work through complexities to protect the area. Ninety percent of the quarter section is protected through EWP and WRP. Several cultural resources sites were identified and are being protected through this program. One particular site along the river served as a crossing for Native Americans and early settlers.



South Dakota Summary

Overview

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to restore, enhance, and protect wetlands. Landowners have the option of enrolling eligible lands through permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements.

In 2002, NRCS of South Dakota received 14 applications for permanent easements and 4 applications for 30-year easements. All applications were approved, involving more than 2,000 acres, while obligating \$1.1 million. The easement value in South Dakota is based on soil productivity ratings to achieve the fair market agricultural value according to property taxation procedures.

Accomplishments

Since 1997, nearly 33,600 acres in South Dakota have been enrolled in WRP through 369 permanent and 30-year contracts.

Program Benefits

South Dakota makes WRP funding decisions at least twice a year. Landowner interest in easements remains high. The majority of the requests come from a 25-county area in eastern South Dakota known as the "Prairie Pothole Region." This area of the state provides nesting and habitat cover for waterfowl.

State Contact

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